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A HISTORY

OF

COVENTRY,

ORLEANS COUNTY, VERMONT.

BY PLINY H. WHITE.

"Posterity Delights in Details."

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HISTORY OF COVENTRY.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Charter. Boundaries. Speculation in lands. Elias Buel, the principal grantee. First settlement. The Cobbs. Feats of strength. Hardships of the settlers.

Until the very last year of the eighteenth century, the township of Coventry was uninhabited by civilized man. An unbroken forest, luxuriant with the growth of centuries, crowned its hill-tops; swamps, black and noisome, occupied its vallies; and no foot-fall disturbed its solitudes, save that of the wild beast or of the wandering Indian. The lapse of sixty years has changed the whole aspect of nature. Where dense woods once shadowed a luxuriant but useless soil, the hand of industry has made broad clearings, where abundant harvests annually repay the labors of the husbandman; instead of the rank and gloomy verdure of the swamp are green and fertile meadows; and instead of the cry of wild beasts or the whoop of Indians are heard the cheery voices of honest toil, the laugh of happy children at their play, the morning prayer, and the evening hymn.

To review the successive stages of this transformation can be no other than a pleasing task. There are, indeed, no remarkable events to record. The town has been the theater of no extraordinary occurrences. Its soil has upheld no Plymouth Rock, has given birth to no Charter Oak, has furnished no field on which patriots have fought for liberty; yet

it cannot be uninteresting to trace the footsteps of those, who, though they may have but slightly affected the destinies of the State or Nation, have, nevertheless, converted the desert into a garden, and made the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Posterity will wish to know by whom civilization was introduced here, and what was the progress of affairs, what household was first gladdened by the birth of a child, and into what family death first brought bereavement and sorrow. There is advantage too, as well as pleasure, in calling to remembrance and perpetuating such facts as these. To trace the mature oak back to the acorn, to follow the broad river up to its fountain-head, will suggest to the observant and thoughtful mind not a few profitable reflections.

The charter of Coventry was granted November 4th, 1780, to Maj. Elias Buel and fifty-nine others. Its boundaries, as defined by the charter, were as follows:—"beginning at a beech tree, marked 'Irasburgh Corner, September 26, 1778,' being the Northwesterly corner of Irasburgh, and running North 36° East, six miles and sixty-three chains, to Lake Memphremagog; then Southeasterly on the shore of said Lake, about twenty-seven chains, to a hemlock tree, marked 'Salem Line, 1778;' then South 45° West, two miles and two chains, to a great hemlock tree, marked 'Salem West Corner, September 30, 1778;' then South 45° East, six miles and twenty-one chains, in the Southerly line of Salem, to a stake five links North West from a cedar tree marked 'Coventry Corner;' then South 36° West, four miles and four chains, to the North line of Irasburgh; then North 54° West, five miles and sixty chains, to the bounds begun at." Within these limits were supposed to be contained 16,767 acres, or about 26 1-5 square miles. To make up the six miles square usually included in a township, there were granted two

thousand acres of land directly South of Newport, called Coventry Gore, and four thousand two hundred and seventy-three acres in Chittenden County, East of Starksboro, called Buel's Gore. The North part of Buel's Gore was annexed to Huntington, in 1794.

That part of the town which bordered on Lake Memphremagog, being in the form of a slip, one hundred and eight rods wide on the Lake and two miles and four rods long, was annexed to Newport. It was called Coventry Leg, somewhat inappropriately, as it was narrowest where it joined the body of the town and widened as it extended North. This left the town in the form of an irregular quadrangle, no two of its sides being of equal length. It is bounded North East (6 1-4 miles) by Newport and Salem, South-East (4 3-4 miles) by Brownington, South-West (5 3-4 miles) by Irasburgh, and North-West (4 1-2 miles) by Newport. Five rights were reserved by the charter, one for the benefit of a College in this State, one for the benefit of a County Grammar School, one for the benefit of schools in town, one for the first settled minister, and one for the support of the ministry as the inhabitants should direct. Buel, the principal agent in procuring the charter, was a native and resident of Coventry, Ct., and, in honor of his birth place, the same name was given to the new township.*

At the time of the chartering of Coventry and for many years after, Orleans County was destitute of inhabitants and inaccessible by roads, and lands were of no value except for speculative purposes. Buel purchased the rights of his associates, one by one, as he had opportunity; paying from five to twenty pounds, and, in a few instances, as much as thirty

* In 1841 the Legislature changed the name to Orleans. About that time an attempt was made to constitute it the shire-town of Orleans County, but the effort was unsuccessful, and, in 1843, the original name was restored.

pounds, for each right; until, in 1788, the title to fifty-four of the sixty rights was vested in him. His deeds, however, were not put on record till 1801, and, in the mean time, sales for taxes and levies of executions against the original proprietors had created conflicting titles to much of the land. In 1791, all the lands in town were sold by Stephen Pearl, Sheriff of Chittenden County, to satisfy a land-tax of a half penny an acre levied by the Legislature of Vermont. Ira Allen purchased most of them, and forty-nine rights, which were not redeemed within the prescribed time, were deeded to him. Buel afterwards quitclaimed to Allen his interest in those rights, and appears to have had little or no more to do with the township.*

Allen made few, if any, sales of his Coventry lands till 1798. In March of that year he was in London, where he met Stephen Bayard of Philadelphia, and sold him the two thousand acres comprised in Coventry Gore for the round sum of sixteen hundred pounds sterling, ($7104.) There is something ludicrous in the minute particularity of English forms of conveyancing as exhibited in the deed, six pages long, by which Allen transferred these two thousand acres of woods and mountains, "together with all and singular houses, outhouses, edifices, buildings, paths, passages, commons, fishing places, hedges, ditches, gates, stiles, fences, ways, waters, water courses, lights, liberties, easements, privileges, profits,

* Concerning Elias Buel, the founder and principal original proprietor of Coventry, it is suitable to put on record a few facts. He was a son of Captain Peter Buel, one of the first settlers of Coventry, Ct., at which place he was born, October 8, 1737. He married, August 6th, 1758, Sarah Turner, by whom he had 1st. Anna, born January 12th, 1759; 2d, Solomon, born April 12th, 1760; 3d, Jesse, born January 4th, 1778. His first residence in Vermont was Rutland. He afterwards removed to Buel's Gore, and resided on that part of it which was annexed to Huntington. In 1798 and 1801, he was an Assistant Judge of Chittenden County Court; in 1799, a member of the Council of Censors; 1801, 1802, 1804 and 1814, the representative of Huntington in the General Assembly of Vermont; and in 1814, the delegate from that town to the Constitutional Convention. In 1819 he removed to Albany, N. Y., where he died May 17th, 1824, at the residence of his son Jesse.

commodities, advantages, hereditaments, and appurtenances whatsoever." If Bayard paid the purchase money or any part of it, it was a dead loss to him, for in the following July a direct land tax was assessed by the Congress of the United States, to satisfy which, Coventry Gore was sold at auction, by James Paddock of Craftsbury, the collector, for $4,80, and was never redeemed. Jabez G. Fitch of Vergennes was the purchaser. He also made large purchases in the main town. William C. Harrington of Burlington had a color of title to eight rights, Reed Ferris of Pawlington, N. Y., to nine, Alexander Schist of Canada to fifteen, Thaddeus Tuttle of Burlington to fifteen, and James Seaman of the city of New York to sixteen. Fitch bought the interests of them, and on the 14th of December, 1801, he took a conveyance of Ira Allen's entire title. By these means he became the ostensible owner of the whole township, and had a valid title to nearly all of it.

It was through Fitch's agency that the settlement of the town was effected. He offered lands at moderate prices to actual settlers, promised gifts of land to some, (which promises, however, were fulfilled in few, if any, instances,) and encouraged immigration as much as possible. Two dollars an acre was the current price of land, with a liberal credit, and cash was seldom required. Most of the early purchasers made their payments in "good clean wheat," or "merchantable neat cattle, (bulls and stags excepted) not exceeding eight years old." In many of the conveyances he reserved to himself "two thirds of the iron ore being and growing on the land," a reservation which never proved of any value. Notwithstanding the pains he took to purchase all outstanding claims, the titles to some of the lands afterwards proved defective, and subjected his grantees to serious loss.

About the year 1800, settlements were commenced almost simultaneously in several towns in Orleans County. With the exception of Craftsbury and Greensboro, no towns in the county had made any progress in population, and several of them were entirely uninhabited. In that year, beginnings were made in Brownington, Morgan, Newport, Troy, and Westmore. In March of the same year the first settlement of Coventry took place. The pioneer settlers were Samuel Cobb and Tisdale Cobb, father and son: Samuel accompanied by his children, Samuel, Jr., Nathaniel, and Silence; and Tisdale by his wife. They came from Westmoreland, N. H., traveling on horseback as far as Brownington, which being the end of the road, they left their horses there, and made their way on foot through the dense woods, marking the trees as they went, till they reached the East part of Coventry. Samuel Cobb pitched on lot No. 11, now owned by Martin W. Davis, and built a log cabin directly opposite the present site of Mr. Davis's house. Tisdale Cobb pitched on lot No. 12, now occupied by Jesse Miller, and built a cabin just East of the present grave-yard. Samuel Cobb, Jr. made an opening on lot No. 6, now occupied by Dennis Sabin, but, being disappointed in some of Fitch's promises, he did not locate permanently. The cabins of these first settlers were exceedingly rude in appearance; built of spruce logs hewn only on the inside, and pointed with mud and moss, roofed with bark, having one door and one or two small windows, and enclosing only a single room, which was made to answer all the purposes of kitchen, dining-room, bed-room, and parlor. Boards were not to be procured nearer than Barton, where Gen. Wm. Barton, the founder of that town, had, in 1796, built a saw-mill. From that mill, boards sufficient to floor the cabins were drawn a distance of ten miles through the path-

less woods. In the following June, Samuel Cobb's wife, (Silence Barney, b. Feb. 21, 1756,) and his younger children, who had remained in Westmoreland while preparations were making for their reception, joined their husband and father in the wilderness, and the first settlement of Coventry was made complete. Tisdale Cobb's family consisted only of himself and wife (Sarah Pierce;) and Samuel's of himself, his wife, three sons, and four daughters.*

These fathers of the town were noteworthy men, and it will be amiss not to give some detailed account of them. Samuel Cobb was a native of Taunton, Mass., born Sept. 3d, 1753. He learned the blacksmith's trade, in which he became an ingenious and skilful workman. In early life he removed to Westmoreland, N. H., where he was one of the pioneer settlers. On the breaking out of the revolutionary war, he enlisted in the army of independence, and rendered efficient service as a soldier and a gunsmith. While in the army he acquired much distinction for his prodigious strength and his great skill in wrestling, an exercise in which our athletic ancestors very freely indulged. Tradition says that on one occasion when a wrestling match was held to determine the championship of that division of the army to which he belonged, he was victorious over all competitors. He was connected with Stark's army at the battle of Bennington, but did not engage in the fight, being occupied in repairing the disabled guns of the other soldiers. At one time, he and his brother Simeon were enrolled as minute men, and Simeon having been summoned to the field, had prepared his knap-

*The sons were Samuel Jr., Hanover, and Nathaniel; the daughters were Silence, Lattice C., Arabella, and Sabrina. After the lapse of nearly sixty years; eight of the eleven persons constituting these two pioneer families still survive; Samuel Cobb, his wife, and Samuel Cobb, Jr. having, in the mean time, deceased. Two of them, Mrs. Isaac Parker, (Arabella Cobb,) and widow (Luke) Day, (Lattice Carlisle Cobb,) reside in Coventry.

sack and gun and was about to start, when Samuel thought he discovered some hesitation in his brother, and asked him if he would rather stay at home, to which he frankly replied that he would. Samuel caught up the equipments and started instantly, not even stopping to bid good-bye to his newly married wife, who from the window watched his departure. Inquiry was afterwards made of her how she felt to see her husband going on such a dangerous expedition. Her reply was in the spirit of a Spartan woman—"I didn't cry a bit: let him do his duty." He continued in the army till nearly or quite the close of the war. When he emigrated to Coventry, he was the very model of a pioneer—in the prime of life, with an iron constitution, inured to all sorts of hardships, fatigue, and exposure, and endowed with strength, activity, and energy, adequate to any emergency. His hands made the first inroads upon the forest and raised the first dwelling-house of civilized man in this town. He lived to see his infant settlement become a populous and thriving community; and, having lived a long and useful life, he died Dec. 19th, 1839, at the ripe old age of eighty-six. His remains rest in the grave-yard near where he lived, and by his side reposes his wife, who died April 6th, 1814.

His children inherited their father's strength and activity and their mother's spirit. Samuel, Jr., even surpassed his father in physical power, and was possessed of a strength truly gigantic. He was six feet and two inches tall, weighed 230 pounds, was perfectly proportioned, and had not an ounce of surplus flesh. Tradition tells of many of his feats and some of them are not unworthy of a more permanent record. At the raising of Jotham Pierce's barn, young Cobb, then only eighteen years old, took one of the corner posts, a green beech stick, twelve feet long, fourteen inches

by nine at one end and slightly tapering, which he shouldered, carried to its place, and setting the foot tenon in its mortise, raised the post to its proper position. On another occasion, several persons were testing their strength by lifting fifty-six pound weights strung on an iron bar. The strongest of them was able, by using both hands and exerting all his power, to raise eight of these weights a very slight distance from the floor. At this moment, Cobb came in, and seeing what was going on, took hold of the bar, and, making some preliminary trials, that he might get it well balanced, raised it with one hand and carried it about the room, "as easily," to use the words of an eye-witness, "as a common man would carry a pail of water." The whole weight was not much less than 475 pounds. In wrestling, no man could stand before him. It is said that he was never thrown but once. A Montreal wrestler came a long distance to try a grapple with the Yankee champion. Cobb underrated his antagonist, and, handling himself carelessly, was thrown, to his infinite chagrin and the equal elation of his adversary. He soon, however, took ample redress for his temporary defeat. The Canadian, confident of winning new laurels, said to him, "The trip that I threw you with was a new one, that you probably never saw before. If you're a mind to take hold again, I'll show you how I do it." This was just what Cobb wanted. Planting himself squarely on the ground, he stood up, straight and immoveable, while his opponent tripped, and twitched, and jerked, all to no purpose, except to show his own incompetency. "That's the way you do it, is it?" said Cobb at length, "now I will show you how I do it;" and, suiting the action to the word, with a single touch of his foot he hurled the Canadian to the earth, and repeated the operation as often as the prostrate man arose, till the crest-fallen wrestler was glad to cry "enough."

Silence Cobb, the oldest daughter, was also of extraordinary strength. She lived for a while with Hon. Elijah Strong of Brownington. One day, William Baxter, Esq., then a young lawyer, boarding at Mr. Strong's, attempted to roll into the house one of those huge back-logs, with which our ancestors were wont to lay the foundation of their fires, but he was not equal to the task. Silence laughed at him for his weakness, and said "If I was a man, I'd pick up that stick, and bring it in." Somewhat nettled by her jeers, he replied, "If you'll carry it in, I will give you a new silk dress." She took him at his word, seized the stick, easily carried it in, and deposited it in the fire-place. The dress, however, was not forthcoming for many years. After she had married and removed from Coventry, she returned for a visit and was invited to Mr. Baxter's. As she was about to leave the house, he put in her hand a slip of paper, which proved to be an order on the Brownington merchant for the best dress pattern to be found in his store.

The other children of Samuel Cobb, though of less remarkable strength, were of more than ordinary physical ability, and, being of athletic frames and rugged constitutions, were admirably qualified to encounter the hardships of a settlement in the wilderness. Hardships they had to endure, and those neither few nor small. It was no light task to conquer the primeval forest, nor was it easy even to procure needful food for themselves and their animals while the work of clearing was going on. There were no roads, no neighbors within two miles, no gristmill nearer than West Derby, and facilities for procuring the most ordinary necessaries, not to say comforts, of life were scanty indeed. By most diligent toil, in which all members of the families bore their parts, each man made a small clearing, in the season of 1800, and

raised grain and potatoes enough to secure them from fear of actual want. Each family had a cow, which gained its living as best it could in the forest. It was the work of the younger girls to find the cows at night and drive them home, oftentimes a laborious task, requiring them to search the woods for miles around. To provide for the cows during the winter was a problem of no easy solution. No hay was raised, but a scanty supply was brought from Barton, and with the help of browse, which was abundant and close at hand they were comfortably wintered. So ended the first years of the infant settlement.

CHAPTER II.

Sawmill and Gristmill built. First child born. Increase of population in 1801 and 1802. Locations of the immigrants. John Ide, Jr. Organization of the town. First school. Another sawmill. First Freeman's Meeting.

In 1801, Samuel Smith of Brownington built a sawmill on the Day brook, near the site of the present mill. This was a great convenience to the settlers, as it obviated the necessity of going to Barton for boards and planks, or of using planks roughly split from logs, which was a not unusual kind of flooring in the early days. A grist-mill was lacking for some years longer, and, in the mean time most of the grain was sent to Arnold's mill at West Derby, being floated down Barton river and through South Bay in canoes. At length, David Kendall built a small gristmill on the Day brook. The stones for this mill were made of the nearest granite, and as there was no bolt in the mill, the meal which it made was of the very coarsest kind. Pudding and milk was the principal food of the settlers, and this mill, which furnished the more solid part of their fare, was called "the pudding-mill," a name by which its site is known to this day. The ruins of this ancient mill are still traceable, a little Westerly of where the road running North by Benjamin Thrasher's crosses the Day brook. As soon as the Cobbs had fairly established themselves, they built a log shop, in which they carried on the business of blacksmithing. They were the only men of

that trade in the Northern part of Orleans County, and they had customers from all the region round about.

The first birth in Coventry took place in July, 1801, when a daughter, Betsey, was born to Tisdale Cobb.

Many of the former townsmen of the Cobbs soon came to visit them and their new settlement, and several families were added to the little colony in 1801 and 1802. Among those who immigrated from Westmoreland were Jotham Pierce, Asa Pierce, William Esty, Simon B. Huestis, John Farnsworth, and John Mitchell. All the settlers prior to 1803 were, in the strictest sense of the phrase, "squatter sovereigns," having no deed of any land, but taking possession where they pleased and procuring deeds when they could. Deeds were executed to them early in 1803. Jotham Pierce pitched on lot No. 15, on which William B. Flanders now lives; William Esty on lot No. 13, now owned by the Day estate; Simon B. Huestis on lot No. 50, where Lewis Nye lives; John Mitchell on lot No. 51, still owned by him; and John Farnsworth on lot No. 52, where J. W. Mitchell lives. Farnsworth brought with him the first oxcart ever seen in town. Previous to that time, all teaming had been done on sleds or drags. Jotham Pierce was a man of great energy, and became an influential citizen of the town. He was the first captain of militia, and magnified his office not a little, as it was suitable he should in those days when a captain was of more consequence than a brigadier-general now is. Daniel B. Smith came in the fall of 1802, and made an opening on lot No. 53, which was the first clearing West of Barton river. He took an active part in town affairs, but remained only till 1805, when he sold to Samuel Boynton, and removed.

About 1802, Joseph Marsh and Timothy Goodrich, both

from Addison County, made the first opening in the West part of the town. A log cabin was built by Jabez G. Fitch, a few rods South of the present residence of George Heerman, near the Upper Falls, and in this cabin Goodrich resided, having as boarders Marsh and his family, and some other persons who like himself, were employed by Fitch in clearing and building. Fitch also made Goodrich's house his home during his occasional visits. Marsh was a man of more intellectual ability than any other of the early settlers. He was a native of New Milford, Ct., and studied law with his uncle, Amos Marsh of Vergennes, a lawyer and politician of some eminence, but did not enter into practice. He was Fitch's agent for the sale of lands and had a general supervision of his affairs in Coventry. Marsh had respectable literary attainments, but was no financier, and though he became owner of some lands he was obliged to transfer them in payment of old debts, and at length he removed to Brownington. Timothy Woodbridge, from Waltham, Vt., came in the fall of 1802, and purchased lots No. 23, 24, and 47, near where R. W. Peabody now lives. Woodbridge was the gentleman of the little colony. He was a son of Hon. Enoch Woodbridge of Vergennes, Judge of Supreme Court of Vermont, and married a niece of Hon. Nathaniel Chipman, another Judge. He held himself in good esteem, as became one so respectably connected, and he was always ready to occupy any place of which the position was honorable and the duties light. After a few years he sold his first purchase, and bought a part of lot No. 156, on which he made a clearing and built a cabin; but in 1807 he sold out and left town. His last clearing is included within the grave-yard near the village. Amherst Stewart pitched on lot No. 3, now owned by Albert Day, and resided there a few years, after which he

removed to Brownington. John Wells, Jr., commenced on the farm now owned by R. W. Peabody, and built a cabin on the hillside West of Barton river. He was the first justice of the peace appointed in town. Perez Gardner from St. Johnsbury came in 1802, and pitched on parts of lots No. 9 and 10, now owned by Zebulon Burroughs.

In March 1803, John Ide Jr., from Westminster, purchased lots. No. 55 and 56, being the farms now owned by Amasa Plastridge, Thomas Baldwin, and Mrs. Sophronia Guild, and made the first clearing at Coventry Center. His house was situated about forty rods North-Westerly of Mr. Plastridge's present residence. For many years he was a leading man in town, and did as much as any one else to give it form and character. Though he had had no educational advantages, he possessed strong, unfailing, common sense, and an integrity of character which was not only above reproach, but above suspicion. By these qualities he won and retained the unwavering confidence of his fellow citizens. Ten years he served the town in its most important municipal offices. Ten years he represented it in the Legislature, and one in the Constitutional Convention. He also held some county offices. At length he entered into the ministry of the gospel, and became pastor of the Baptist Church in Coventry. He was the first settled minister. In this sphere of duty his labors were many, arduous, and successful, and he well deserves a long and grateful remembrance as the religious father of the town.

The settlers whose names have now been mentioned, sixteen in number, constituted the adult male population of the town in March 1803. Until that time there was no municipal organization, as indeed there was little need of any. Whatever of a public nature was done, not much at the most, was accomplished by voluntary private effort. But it was now

thought desirable that the town should be organized, and accordingly application was made to Luke Chapin, Esq. of Duncansboro, (now Newport,) who issued his warrant for a town meeting, to be held at Samuel Cobb's house, on Thursday, March 31st, 1803. At that time and place the town was organized by the choice of officers as follows:

JOHN WELLS, JR., Moderator.

JOSEPH MARSH, Clerk.

TIMOTHY WOODBRIDGE, First Constable.

SAMUEL COBB, Treasurer.

SAMUEL COBB, DANIEL B. SMITH, and JOHN IDE, JR., Selectmen.

PEREZ GARDNER, JOHN WELLS, JR., and JOSEPH MARSH, Listers.

JOSEPH MARSH, SAMUEL COBB, JOHN WELLS, JR., and DANIEL B. SMITH, Highway Surveyors.

PEREZ GARDNER, Grand Juror.

It was voted that each inhabitant should work on the roads four days in June and two days in September. A tax of twelve dollars was raised to defray current expenses of the town. The grand list of 1803, the first taken in town, and on which this tax was assessed, amounted to $608. The highest tax payer was John Wells Jr., who paid a town tax of $1,39, and a state tax of ninety-six cents.

Most of the early settlers were uneducated men, but they were not insensible to the value of education, nor deficient in desire that their children should know more than themselves. They had no schoolhouse however, were too poor to build one, and there was no spare room in their cabins where a school might be held. At length, Samuel Cobb's corn-barn was temporarily converted to the purposes of a schoolhouse, and here, in the summer of 1803, Temperance Vincent, taught

the first school in Coventry, for the moderate compensation of one dollar per week. A ruder building was perhaps never devoted to educational purposes. It was small, not clapboarded, and lighted only by the open doorway and the cracks between the boards. The seats were rough boards laid upon blocks of wood, and the desks were constructed in the same way. In this unsightly building the rudiments of education were imparted to some who are now among the most valuable citizens of the town.*

In the summer of 1803, a saw-mill, the second in town and much better than the first, was built on the upper falls of Black River, by Jabez G. Fitch. This and the adjacent cabin of Goodrich and Marsh constituted a center of civilization in the West part of the town, as the Cobb settlement did in the East.

The first Freemen's Meeting was held Sept. 6th, 1803, when sixteen votes, the unanimous vote of the town, were given for Isaac Tichenor for governor. Joseph Marsh had the honor of being the first representative; receiving nine votes against two for John Wells, Jr., and one each for Samuel Cobb and D. B. Smith.

*Miss Vincent, the first teacher of the youth of Coventry, was a daughter of Joseph Vincent from Stonington, Ct., one of the early settlers of St. Johnsbury, Vt. She married—1st, Riverius Burt; 2d, Joseph Lawrence, and, as the widow of the latter, is yet living in Glover at the good old age of eighty-two.

CHAPTER III.

First birth of a male. First marriage, and death. New settlers in 1804. A political heretic. Taxes payable in wheat. Immigrants in 1805. First physician. Roads and traveling. "Shark Thompson."

The year 1804 was signalized by the first birth of a male child, the first marriage, and the first death. On the 17th of February, a son, George B., was born to John Ide, Jr. That son is now the Rev. George B. Ide, D. D. of Springfield, Mass., one of the most eminent Baptist divines in the country. The marriage was that of Silence Cobb to Col. David Knox of Tunbridge, which was solemnized March 11th, by Elijah Strong, Esq., of Brownington. The death was that of Mrs. John Farnsworth, which took place Dec. 4th. There being then no public graveyard, she was buried on her husband's farm, and her grave-stone may still be seen at the four corners on South Hill.*

Among the new settlers in 1804 were George Dorr, Benjamin Walker, Charles Bryant, Thomas Baldwin, Daniel

*As the stone that marks this lonely grave is crumbling under the touch of time, it is well to perpetuate the epitaph which it bears. It is as follows:—

In memory of
Polley, wife of Mr
John Farnsworth, daughter
of Mr Charles Church,
Westmoreland, N. H.
died
4 Dec 1804.

Ide, John Gardner, and Aristides Huestis. Dorr bought of J. G. Fitch lot No. 75, where Azro Gray now lives. His title afterwards proved defective, and Fitch having in the mean time become bankrupt, he was compelled to repurchase the lot of the legal owner. Bryant pitched on lot No. 42, now occupied by Ira Sessions; Walker on lot No. 49, now owned by Amos Kinne; Huestis on lot No. 76, now owned by Hubbard Gray; and Baldwin on lot No. 57, now owned by Thomas H. Baldwin. Ide pitched on lot No. 89, where Daniel True now lives, and made the first opening in the North Neighborhood. Gardner was the first house-carpenter.

The political harmony which had hitherto prevailed, as witnessed by the unanimous vote for Tichenor in 1803, was slightly disturbed in 1804, when Jonathan Robinson was the opposing candidate. One vote was given for the Robinson ticket; and at an election for member of Congress, the same independent voter cast his solitary suffrage for James Fisk, in opposition to William Chamberlain, who was the choice of all his townsmen. It is quite probable that Charles Bryant was this voter. One vote was also given for Robinson in 1805, but in 1806, after Bryant had sold out and left town, the vote was again unanimous for Tichenor.

At the town meeting of 1805, a tax of twelve dollars worth of wheat was raised for the purpose of defraying town charges. Wheat, then and for a long time after, was the principal currency in Orleans County. Town and school district taxes were assessed in wheat much more frequently than in cash. A cash tax, however small, was considered quite a calamity, and, in fact, was such. An individual was once obliged to go more than fifty miles, to procure less than a dollar for the purpose of paying a tax. On account of the

scarcity of money it often happened that no tax whatever was assessed, the officers choosing to render their services gratuitously, and the people in general to do with their own hands whatever needed to be done, rather than to pay their proportion of a tax. On one occasion, when two bridges were to be built, the town voted "that the inhabitants turn out voluntarily to build the bridge at Burroughs' mill, and that $45 be raised to build the bridge across Black river, payable in labor at 67 cents per day, the person finding himself, or in grain the first of January next."

Solomon Pierce immigrated in 1805, and pitched on lot No. 82, being the farm on which Rev. A. R. Gray now lives. In June of the same year came Dr. Peleg Redfield, and purchased lot No. 44, on the Eastern border of which he made a clearing and built a house. The farm still remains in the ownership of his family. Dr. Redfield was the first settled physician in Coventry, and the third in Orleans County; his only predecessors being Dr. Samuel Huntington of Greensboro and Dr. Luther Newcomb of Derby. He was a native of Killingworth, Ct., (born June 24th, 1774) studied his profession with Dr. Samuel Ware of Conway, Mass., and commenced practice at Weathersfield, Vt., from which place he removed his family to Coventry, in February, 1806. His practice immediately became extensive and arduous. His journeys to the scattered cabins in which his patients resided were performed mainly on horseback, but not unfrequently he was obliged to thread his way through the forests on foot. He was a man of vigorous mind and great force of character, and was held in high esteem not only for professional skill but for business qualities. A large amount of town business was allotted to him, and he sometimes held at the same time three of the most important offices. He was representative

in the legislature for nine successive years, 1812—20. He is entitled to be remembered for his own abilities, and as the father of sons who, in another profession, have won eminent distinction for themselves, and have reflected honor upon the town from which they went forth.*

In October and November 1805 the first public roads were laid out. Until that time the roads were mere paths cut through the woods, with reference mainly to private convenience, and no wider than was absolutely necessary for a single team, not always so wide as that. When John Farnsworth came into town with his ox-cart, the whole population had to perform extra work on the road from Brownington, to allow the passage of so wide a vehicle. The public roads now laid out were three rods wide. Their general direction was North and South, but alterations and discontinuances have so changed the state of things that it is difficult now to identify more than one of them, which was, in the main, the road from Irasburgh line over South hill to the Center. Little more was done to roads then and for many years after than to clear them of trees, leaving stumps, and stones, and mud-holes, for the traveler to avoid as best he could. Sometimes a by-path was cut around an unusually formidable slough, or logs were laid in it; but, at the best, the going was very uncomfortable, not to say dangerous. Traveling was performed principally on horseback, both men and women taking long journeys in that way. Frequently a man and woman rode on the same horse, and sometimes a

* Dr. Redfield was the only resident physician till the winter of 1823—04, when Dr. Samuel S. Kendall, from Derby, commenced practice here, and continued, except a short absence, till the winter of 1851—52. Dr. Ezra S. Trask came Nov. 18th, 1828, and remained till April 30th, 1830. Dr. Henry Hewitt came Jan. 24th, 1830, and remained till 1836. Dr. David W. Blanchard came March 25th, 1847, and is now the only resident physician. Besides these there have been some irregular practitioners, and two or three physicians who have remained each a few months.

woman took two or three children on the horse with herself. A sled drawn by oxen was almost the only other mode of conveyance known in the early days. Oxen were trained to travel as well as to draw loads, and sometimes would perform a pleasure-trip at a speed of more than four miles an hour.

In 1806 came Isaac Baldwin from Westminster, Samuel Boynton from Westmoreland, N. H., and Eben Hosmer from Concord, Mass. Baldwin and Boynton bought lots already improved. Hosmer made a commencement on lot No. 88, now owned by Erastus Wright. In 1806 came also Samuel Thompson, and purchased lot No. 139, which he afterwards sold, and then bought of Joseph Marsh parts of lots No. 136 and 137. He lived in a log cabin built by Marsh, near where Isaac Hancock now lives. He was a most original and eccentric character, and was familiarly called "Shark Thompson." His moods were various and contradictory. At times he was irritable in the extreme, and the slightest provocation would rouse him to ungovernable wrath which vented itself in the most horrid profanity and most brutal conduct. One of his cotemporaries said that "he could swear the legs off from an iron kettle in less than two minutes." He ruled his family with a rod of iron. A son of his was once the innocent cause of the death of a cow, and for nine successive days Thompson administered to him a severe whipping every morning and evening. He was poor to the very last degree of penury. Very often his wife and children suffered severely for want of suitable food and clothing. Sheriffs constantly harassed him with attachments and executions, and were sometimes greatly harassed in return. Jotham Pierce once attempted to serve a process on him by driving away some cattle, which Thompson prevented by putting up the bars as often as Pierce could let them down. During

the struggle, Thompson, having a favorable opportunity, caught one of Pierce's fingers between his teeth, and fixed them into it with a vigor and tenacity of grip, which, in the officer's estimation, fully justified the appellation of "Shark."

But there was another side to his character. He was very kind and obliging to his neighbors, and would divide his last morsel of food with any one who was in need. He was full of sympathy for the sorrowful and suffering. Tears would flow copiously down his sun-burnt cheeks as he stood by the bedside of a dying neighbor, and from the depths of his soul would come up the consoling expression, "By Judas, it's too bad," which was his unvarying formula on such occasions. He had by nature a strong mind, though it was never cultivated. There being no lawyer in the immediate vicinity, he took up "pettifogging," in which he achieved a good deal of celebrity. He had a gift of extemporizing law to meet the emergencies of a case, and the fluency and vigor of speech with which he maintained his positions, rendered him an antagonist not to be despised even by the regular practitioners of the law. In after life, he moved to Potten, C. E., where he made a profession of religion, and became an active exhorter. How well he succeeded in that capacity may be inferred from the account he himself gave of one of his performances—"I attended an evening meeting, and found them all dull and sleepy. The spirit didn't move a bit. Pretty soon I thought I would see what I could do, and I got up, and in less than five minutes, by Judas, I had 'em all afire."

CHAPTER IV.

Roads. School Districts. First Schoolmaster and first Graduate. War of 1812. "The Swamp Angel." Hard times. Manufacture of Salts. Accidental Death.

The first road from East to West was laid out in June 1806. It extended from the upper falls of Black River, through the Center, "to the West side of Jotham Pierce's opening," near the present residence of William B. Flanders. As it went Eastwardly from the Center, it diverged, at an angle of about 45° South from the present road, passed the lowlands on a log causeway about thirty rods long and four feet high, and crossed Barton River near where Willard Fairbrother now lives, with the first bridge built over that stream in Coventry. On the 6th of June 1810, the waters of Runaway Pond carried off the bridge and causeway, covered the meadow with several inches of soft sticky mud, and compelled a change of the road to its present location. Miss Betsey Parker was crossing the causeway on horseback, as the flood approached; and, hearing a frightful noise, though she could see nothing, she quickened the speed of her horse, but had hardly reached Dr. Redfield's house, a few rods West of the causeway, when the rushing torrent overwhelmed the road she had so recently passed. The Westerly end of the road has also been quite changed in location, but across the hill it remains as at first. At the same time this road was laid,

a road was laid from South Hill Westerly in a bee-line to a junction with the first-named road, being mainly the road as now traveled.

At the March meeting in 1806, the town was divided into two school districts, Barton River being the dividing line. The first clerk's return, made in September 1807, showed that there were seventeen scholars in each district.

Among the new comers in 1808 was Isaac Parker from Cavendish. In the winter of that year he taught the second school ever kept in town, and the first which was taught by a male teacher. His school-house was a log-cabin near Samuel Cobb's, and his pupils came from all parts of the town. While imparting to others the rudiments of knowledge, he was himself making acquisitions in the higher departments of learning, and to so good purpose, that in the Spring of 1813 he entered Middlebury College considerably in advance, and was graduated in 1815, the first graduate from Coventry. He continued to teach, and as there was at that early day no institution in the county at which a full preparation for college could be made, he established a school at his own house, where for several years young men were taught the classics and higher mathematics. Among those who laid the foundations of a liberal education under his tuition were Isaac F. Redfield, George B. Ide, Jonathan Clement, and several others who have attained eminence or respectability in the learned professions. His influence was long and happily exerted in the developement of intellect in his adopted town, where will be held in lasting and honorable regard as the father of education in Coventry.

The war with Great Britain in 1812 occasioned great alarm in all the frontier settlements, and the inhabitants of Coventry shared in the general panic. Lake Memphremagog

and the adjacent country had been a favorite resort of the Indians, for purposes of fishing and hunting; and although they had almost entirely abandoned that region just before the year 1800, leaving only a few scattered individuals whose relations to the settlers were always friendly, it was supposed that they still remained in great numbers near the outlet of the Lake, ready, whenever opportunity offered, to exterminate the civilization before whose onward march they had been compelled to retire. Tales of Indian cruelties were familiar to every ear, and the knowledge that Great Britain had made alliance with the savages carried dismay to many a heart which would fearlessly have met the fortunes of a warfare conducted in a less atrocious manner. Each little settlement imagined that itself would be first to experience the assault of a secret and blood-thirsty foe. The dwellers in the Black River valley were sure that the Indians would avail themselves of the facilities of approach afforded by that stream; equally certain were the inhabitants along the banks of Barton River that they should be surprised in a similar manner. The terror which prevailed was extreme. Some of the most fearful sought safety in flight, abandoned their clearings, and hastily gathering together such of their personal possessions as were most valuable and most portable, fled to the older settlements. Others, more courageous, determined to abide the result, and made all possible preparation for the expected attack. Rusty old muskets were scoured and kept constantly loaded, axes were put into fighting condition, and butcher-knives were sharpened to be used by men or women in the last desperate resort of hand-to-hand struggle. In the West part of the town, the inhabitants assembled at the house of Samuel McCurdy, near where James Hancock now lives, and in the East part of the

town Israel Ide's was the place of refuge. These were strongly built houses, more defensible than most of the others, and about them guards were stationed, while scouts were kept at watch for the approach of the enemy. For some time there was constant apprehension of an attack. The cracking of a limb in the forest or the midnight hoot of an owl were sufficient to alarm the little garrisons. But as time passed away and no foes made their appearance, the panic subsided and the settlers returned to their former avocations, which they pursued without molestation and without further fear.

The evils which were occasioned by this temporary suspension of peaceful employments did not all cease when the fears of the people were allayed. It was difficult for the British forces in Canada to procure provisions, and their commissaries often came secretly into the border towns of the United States to purchase supplies. They found some in Coventry, as well as in other towns, whose covetousness was greater than their patriotism, and from them cattle were bought at enormous prices and driven to Canada by night to feed the enemies of America. The detection of some of these unpatriotic men aroused no little indignation, and caused alienations of feeling which lasted for many years. Smuggling was also greatly increased by the war. The unsettled state of affairs along the borders made this crime easy and profitable. To suppress that, and to guard against hostile approaches which might possibly take place, a corps of soldiers was raised, and stationed at Derby Line. Of this company Hiram Mason of Craftsbury was Captain, and Tisdale Cobb of Coventry, Lieutenant. Five citizens of Coventry—Zebulon Burroughs, Joseph Priest, Timothy Heerman, Rufus Guild, and Benjamin Baldwin, were among the

privates. This company remained in service six months, from September 16th, 1812 to March 16th, 1813, but had no opportunity to do anything more than to prevent smuggling. The town held a special meeting, June 16th, 1812, to take action respecting the war, and voted a tax of one cent on the dollar, to be expended in ammunition. The grand list that year amounted to $2857, so that the sum raised by this tax was $28,57, a small sum in modern estimation, but by no means insignificant to those who had to pay it from their almost empty purses. Nineteen militia men were returned as "armed and equipped according to law." "Cornet" Daniel Huestis and horse are also on record as obedient to the requirements of the statute in that regard. Huestis belonged to a small company of cavalry, the members of which were scattered throughout the county.

About the year 1813 came Ammi Burrington from Burke, and purchased the tract of land on which stood the pudding-mill and saw-mill; which however, he soon sold and moved into the West part of the town. He was familiarly called "the swamp angel," and if the domains of actual or imaginary zoology contain any such being as that, he was probably not unworthy of the *sobriquet*. He was nearly seven feet in hight, broad-shouldered, long-limbed, gaunt, skinny, and crooked; with dark complexion, wide mouth, large teeth, and other features to match. Tradition says that the name was given him by a Yankee peddler, whom he asked to give him a ride. The peddler told him that if he would ride within the box as far as the next tavern and remain in the box for an hour after arriving there, he should have not only a ride but his keeping over night. Ammi readily accepted the proposition and took his place among the tin-ware. Upon arriving at the tavern, the peddler announced himself as the

exhibitor of "a very rare animal—the swamp angel," and proceeded to exhibit Ammi for a certain price, to his own good profit and the great amusement of the spectators.

Hardly had the town recovered from the injuries inflicted on it by the war of 1812, when it was visited by calamity from another source. The year 1816 was memorable in all the new settlements as a year of extraordinary privations and sufferings. An unusually early Spring had created expectations of a fruitful season and an abundant harvest, but on the morning of June 9th there occurred a frost of almost unprecedented severity, followed by a fall of snow, which covered the earth to the depth of some inches, and was blown into drifts two or three feet deep. All the growing crops were cut down. Even the foliage on the trees was destroyed, and so completely as respected the beeches that they did not put forth leaves again that year. No hope or possibility of a harvest remained, and the settlers had before them the gloomy prospect of extreme scarcity if not of actual famine. Their forebodings were more than realized. Not a single crop came to maturity. Wheat alone progressed so far that by harvesting it while yet in the milk, and drying it in the oven, it might be mashed into dough and baked, or boiled like rice. There was neither corn nor rye except what was brought from abroad, sometimes from a great distance. One person went to Windsor County and procured a load of those grains, which he sold for three dollars and upwards per bushel. A peck of corn was regarded as a good compensation for the day's work of a man. Salt commanded $4,50 per bushel and could be procured only with cash. All other kinds of provisions were held at prices proportionately high. The inhabitants prepared themselves as best they could for the fearful winter

which they saw before them. Flesh, fish, and vegetables of every kind that could possibly be used as food were converted to that purpose. To what straits they were reduced may be judged from the fact that hedgehogs "were made great account of" and nettles, boiled as greens, sometimes constituted the entire dinner of a family. Often it occurred that the last morsel of food in a house was consumed, while the householder neither knew where to procure more nor had the means of paying for it. Frequently the father or mother of a family was compelled to start in the morning without breakfast, go on foot to Barton, Brownington, or Derby, procure a little pittance of rye or corn, and return home, before any of the family could have a mouthful of food. One morning, Abijah Knight found that his whole stock of provisions, for a family of seven persons, amounted to only half a loaf of bread. His neighbor, Matthias Gorham, with a family of equal number, had no bread at all. He shared the half loaf with his more destitute neighbor, and then both of them started for Lyndon with a load of salts which they hoped to exchange for food. Mr. Knight was fortunate enough to effect his object at Barton, where he procured three pecks of corn, and about twenty pounds of fish, rice, and other groceries, all of which he carried on his back, through Brownington, to his home in the North Neighborhood, a distance of about twelve miles. This being done, the two families were able to make amends for a scanty breakfast and scantier dinner by a hearty supper. This was one of many such cases.

The manufacture of "salts" was then, and, in fact, during the whole early history of the town, an important branch of business. Almost every one engaged in it more or less extensively. "Salts" were made by boiling the ley of hard

wood ashes to such a consistency that when cold it might be carried in a basket. In this condition they were sold to the manufacturers of pearlash. Barton was the nearest market for them. To this place they were carried sometimes on sleds, but as sleds were rare, a less expensive vehicle was usually employed. A forked "staddle" was cut down, the body of which was used as a tongue to enter the ring of an ox-yoke, and across the forked part, which was somewhat bent so as to be easily dragged over the ground, a few slats were nailed, and on these was deposited the box or basket of salts. If a horse was to be used, a pair of thills was made of poles, turned up at the hinder end like a sled-runner, and connected by strips of board. One of these vehicles seldom performed more than a single journey, the owner choosing to leave it on the wood pile near the ashery rather than to drag it home. A yet ruder mode of conveyance than either of these was sometimes adopted. A log, longer or shorter according to the quantity to be carried, was hollowed out like a trough, rounded up at the end which was to go forward, and dragged by a chain and horse. To prevent the log from rolling over and spilling its contents, a stick was inserted in the hinder end and held constantly by the driver, as one would hold a plowtail. The market value of salts was very variable, ranging from $3 to $5 1-2 per hundred pounds, but they could always be sold at a fair price and for cash. Leather, salt, flour, and other staple articles which were held for cash were freely given in exchange for salts. Sometimes they would buy what money could not. During this season of famine they were the main reliance of the people of Coventy, and had the demand for salts ceased many a family would have been brought to actual starvation.

There were some circumstances which rendered the scar-

city of bread stuffs a less intolerable calamity than it would otherwise have been. It was a time of universal good health. Hardly a single case of severe sickness occurred that year. The rivers and brooks afforded a considerable supply of fish. The trouts, weighing three pounds and upwards, which in the early years of the town were so numerous that they might be caught by hundreds, had indeed been almost exterminated, but other species were somewhat abundant, and it was not a time to be dainty in the choice of food. Suckers sometimes constituted the entire living of a family for days in succession, and happy were they who fared as well as that. Winter, however, prevented a resort to the rivers, except in extreme emergencies, when a scanty supply of fish was caught, through holes cut in the ice. During the whole period of distress, the settlers cordially befriended each other, and rendered mutual assistance as their means allowed. Each man was neighbor to every other man. He who had little shared it with him who had none. Some who would not sell their previous years' crop of corn lest themselves might be straitened for food, freely gave to the poor and destitute the grain which they had refused to exchange for money. By exercising the most pinching economy of food, all were able to meet the crisis; and although there was extreme suffering, and starvation seemed almost inevitable, not an individual perished.

In August 1816, occurred the first death by accident. Franklin Bartholomew of Brownington, a lad about twelve years of age, was going home from the pudding mill on horseback with a grist. He had put the bridle over his head, and when near the present residence of Benjamin Thrasher, the horse took fright and run, throwing him to the ground, where

he was drawn by the bridle and beaten by the horse's feet till life was extinct.

During the five years including 1812 and 1816, there was almost no increase of property. The grand list of the latter year exceeded that of the former by less than forty dollars. The influx of population seems also to have nearly ceased. There were fifty-one tax payers in 1812, and just the same number in 1816. Contrary to what was expectable, the year of famine was signalized by more than the usual number of marriages. Previously, marriages did not average more than one a year, but in 1816, three couples put their sufferings and sorrows into common stock.

CHAPTER V.

Shocking death. Post-office established. Origin and progress of the village. First store, and first ashery. Fourth of July. First tavern. Settlement of West Hill. Another merchant. The first shoemaker. Settlement of Coventry Gore. First tannery.

On the 12th day of June 1818, there occurred a singular and horrible casualty, resulting in the death of Mr. George Dorr. He was in the woods alone with his oxen, drawing logs. In passing over a fallen tree the chain caught fast, and as he disengaged it, the oxen started suddenly, jerking the chain-hook into the calf of his leg just below the knee, and throwing him to the ground. He vainly endeavored to stop them by speaking to them. They went at a quick pace, dragging him on his back, over logs, stumps, and stones, a distance of about a hundred rods to his own barn yard, where they stopped. In the mean time, the hook had worked its way down his leg, tearing the flesh from the bone, till its farther progress was arrested by the strong tendon of the heel. His whole back was covered with wounds and bruises. Surgery was of no avail, and he lingered four days in great agony, when death came to his relief.

In 1821 a post office was established, and Isaac Parker, who resided where Lebbeus Babcock now lives, was appointed postmaster. Until that time, residents of Coventry had their mail accommodations at Brownington office. The

route by which the new office was supplied had its termini at Burlington and Derby, between which points the mail was carried once a week each way, by Daniel Davidson of Craftsbury. This was quite sufficient to meet the necessities of the people at that time, as may be judged from the fact that the whole receipts of the office for the first year did not exceed six dollars.

The town had slowly increased in population and property till, in 1821, there were about three hundred inhabitants, many of whom were in comfortable circumstances. But capital and enterprise were lacking. At that date there were only two saw-mills and those quite dilapidated; there was no grist-mill deserving the name, no store, mechanic's shop, public house, nor house of worship. There was no semblance of a village except at the Center, where there were four or five dwelling-houses, and a schoolhouse, and the roads for forty rods each way were laid one rod wider than through the rest of the town. All the trade went to Barton, Brownington, or Derby, occasioning great inconvenience and labor, and much loss of time. But a new condition of things was about to take place. At a sale of lands for taxes in 1813, Calvin Harmon and Argalus Harmon, of Vergennes, bought for $3 lots No. 41 and 107 and a part of lot No. 111. Lot No. 107 is now the site of the village. When the Harmons purchased it, it was a mere wilderness, and the level part of it was a cedar swamp. They were men of intelligence, energy, wealth, and business habits, and all these they put in exercise to advance the interests of the town in which they took up their residence. They engaged actively in business themselves, encouraged farmers and mechanics to immigrate, and gave a powerful impetus to the prosperity of the place. Well knowing the value of such a water power

as is furnished by the falls of Black River, they decided to lay the foundation of a village beside those falls, and to that work they now directed all their energies.

In 1821, the Harmons employed Thomas Baldwin to clear five acres of land near where the Congregational meeting house stands. He underlet a part of the job to Ammi Burrington, who felled the first tree in the village, and built the first house, a small log cabin, near the spot now occupied by Mrs. Mary Persons's house. Two other log cabins were built soon after, one of them on the present site of Holland Thrasher's house, the other on the spot now occupied by Loren Soper's house. Eber R. Hamilton occupied the former, and kept a boarding house for those who were employed by the Harmons in clearing and building. Jonas Cutting lived in the other, and carried on the blacksmith's business in a shop immediately adjacent to his house. These houses were built merely to subserve temporary purposes till better ones could be erected. In 1822 Calvin Harmon and his brother Daniel W. moved in and immediately commenced operations on a somewhat extended scale. A store was speedily built and stocked with merchandize. It still occupies its original site and is a part of the store of Messrs. Soper & Bean. The variety of goods was not great, but it was sufficient to supply the wants of the people, and the store was in truth a great benefit to the town, not only by furnishing articles for which the inhabitants must otherwise have gone abroad, but by providing a home market for grain, salts, and whatever else they had to sell. During the same season a saw-mill was built, on the site of the present mill.

In the fall, Calvin Harmon built a two-story dwelling house, the same in which D. P. Walworth resides. Daniel W. Harmon lived for a while in a small framed house close

by Burrington's cabin, and afterwards built and occupied the house in which Charles Thrasher lives. An ashery for the manufacture of pearlash was built on the river bank Eastwardly from the store. It fell down in a few years, and the ground where it stood has been almost entirely washed away by the river.

The anniversary of our national independence was celebrated in Coventry for the first time in 1822. The celebration took place at the Center, and George B. Ide, then a little more than eighteen years old, was the orator.

In January 1823 the first school-house in the village was built, by the voluntary contributions and labor of the inhabitants. The top of a very large hard-wood stump was leveled and smoothed to supply a solid foundation for one of the corners. In the following winter the first school was taught in this house by Loring Frost. The building, with some alterations, and additions, is now occupied as a dwelling by Hartford Hancock.* Eber R. Hamilton built in 1823 the house in which Jacob Hurd lives, and commenced keeping tavern there. Calvin Harmon built a blacksmith's shop on the river bank a little below the falls, and furnished it with a trip-hammer. It was occupied successively by Jonas Cutting, Holland Witt, Daniel Bartlett, and Holland Thrasher, and was burned April 16th, 1834.† Calvin and Daniel Harmon gave the land for a village common, on condition that the citizens should clear it of stumps and smooth the surface. They were slow in complying with the condition, and

* This school-house was used till 1835, when another was built, which is still standing just South of Hartford Hancock's house. The present school-house, one of the best in the county, was built in 1857-8, at an expense of $2500. The bell upon it was a gift from Dea. Loring Frost.

† Mr. Thrasher then built a shop, standing partly on the ground occupied by John R. Thrasher's store and partly East of that. This was burned April 1st, 1843, and he then built the shop now occupied by him. He has been a blacksmith in the village since April 1822.

to expedite matters, it was agreed that whoever became "the worse for liquor" should do public penance by digging out one stump. This proved to be much more effectual in clearing the land than in preventing drunkenness.

The first permanent settlement on West Hill was made in 1823 by Aretas Knight from Westmoreland, N. H., who commenced on the farm now owned by Amos K. Cleveland. Calvin Walker had previously made a clearing and built a cabin on the summit West of Sylvester Cass's house, but he became discouraged and abandoned his improvements. When Mr. Knights first went to his farm the forest was so dense that he spent half a day in going from the village to the spot where he pitched. Calvin Harmon assured him that he would by and by see the stage passing over the same route which he had traversed with so much difficulty, and this prediction was fulfilled. Knights built a small house, which was for some time the only dwelling on the hill. It served as a house of entertainment for such as came to examine lands before purchasing, and a boarding house for settlers till they could build for themselves. There was quite a rapid immigration into that part of the town, and his house was sometimes crowded to the utmost. It was inhabited several months by twenty-three individuals, eight of whom were married couples with fourteen children under seven years of age. The little building which contained so large a population is now one of Mr. Cleveland's out-houses. Tyler Knight commenced in 1823 on the farm now owned by Moody Soper; John M. Fairbanks and John Mills, in 1825, on the farms still owned by them. Sidney White began where John Armington now lives, and Walter Bowman on the farm now owned by Dexter Wood.

In 1824 came Argalus Harmon, who bought the mills at the

upper falls, and built a store and a two story house on the level East of Joseph Kidder's present residence. Both these buildings were afterwards taken down and converted to other purposes. The site of the house is indicated by a row of shade trees, and the store stood directly opposite. In February 1825, Calvin and Daniel W. Harmon sold their stock of goods to Elijah Cleveland & Co., who commenced business with a larger and more varied assortment than had before been offered for sale in this part of the country. They also sold at much lower prices than any of their competitors, and soon secured an extensive custom. Molasses was sold at a dollar per gallon, bohea tea at fifty-eight cents a pound and young hyson at a dollar and a half, loaf sugar at twenty-eight cents, brown sugar at fourteen cents, allspice at fifty cents, cinnamon at ten cents an ounce, salt at two dollars and a quarter per bushel, nails at fourteen cents a pound, pins at twenty-five cents a paper, shirting at twenty-five cents a yard, calico at prices varying from twenty-five to fifty cents a yard, and all other goods at proportionate prices. Two circumstances conspired to enhance the value of merchandise in those days. One was the great expense of transportation, which in the case of heavy articles much exceeded the original cost of the goods. Portland and Boston were the nearest places at which merchants could supply themselves. From Portland goods were drawn by horse teams over a long and difficult road. Transportation from Boston was accomplished generally in the same way; but sometimes merchandise was sent on vessels, by New York, Albany, and Whitehall to Bur-

lington, and thence conveyed by horse teams. Another circumstance which increased prices was that goods were sold mainly on credit and for barter pay. The almost invariable terms were that payment should be made in wheat in the January following the purchases, which if the customer failed to do he was required to pay cash and interest within the succeeding year. January was always a busy month with the merchant. All the teams in the vicinity were put in requisition to carry wheat to market, and when ten, fifteen, or twenty two-horse teams were loaded and started for Portland, the merchant took stage or private conveyance, and reached the city in season to sell his grain and make his purchases so that on arrival of the teams they might immediately be loaded for the return trip. If a satisfactory price could not be obtained, the grain was shipped from that place to Boston, but the former city was the place of resort in the first instance, and so continued till the opening of a railroad from Boston Northwestwardly turned the current of trade towards that city, and as the expenses of transportation diminished, the prices of goods decreased in proportion.

In June 1825, Nathaniel Daggett came to the Center and commenced shoemaking in the front room of Daniel Ide's house, (now occupied by Thomas Baldwin.) He was the first shoemaker who pursued the business as a regular trade. Others had done some shoemaking as incidental to their main employment, and one individual, John Hamilton, had "whipped the cat" from house to house. Daggett at once entered upon a good business. In the fall of 1826 he built a shop on the spot where the brick meeting-house now stands. In the fall of 1825, John C. Morrill built a shop in the village

and was the first shoemaker there. His shop was afterwards converted into a dwelling-house, and is now occupied by, J. M. Vezey.* During the same year, William Miner and Amasa Wheelock commenced the business of tanning, on the site of the present tannery. They built a dwelling house and currier's shop, still standing in a dilapidated condition. The apparatus for grinding bark was efficient though simple. A round flat stone, somewhat like a millstone, about eight feet in diameter and as many inches thick, was set on edge. Through the center passed a spindle, one end of which was inserted into an upright shaft, and to the other end a horse was attached. The stone was thus made to describe a circle around the shaft, about fifty feet in circumference, at the same time revolving on its own axis, and crushing the bark between itself and the plank floor beneath.† In 1825 Mr. Cleveland built an ashery, in which he began to make pearl-ash in December. The ashery stood just South of the "Union" blacksmith's shop. It was burned two or three years after, and another immediately built on the same spot. In the summer of 1856 the building having become ruinous, it was taken down and the materials used to make the embankment at the South end of the bridge.

The settlement of Coventry Gore was commenced October 7th 1825, by Archibald W. Higgins, who, with three other

* Mr. Merrill continued in business till the fall of 1827, when he was succeeded by Austin Stevens. Stevens built an addition to the shop and carried on business till the spring of 1844. In the fall of 1843, Eli Revore commenced business in the lower part of the house now occupied by H. H. Frost Esq. and continued till the winter of 1846. In August 1847, Childs Brooks commenced business, on a larger scale than any of his predecessors, and he remains in business at the present time.

† In the summer of 1828 Messrs. Wheelock and Miner sold to Sylvester and Philander S. Rand, who carried on the business till the spring of 1831, when Sylvester Rand sold his interest to Joseph N. Savage. In January 1834, Rand and Savage sold to Lewis Nye, and in May 1836, Jacob Hurd bought the premises and carried on the business till the spring of 1838, when Benjamin F. Herbert became proprietor and has continued until now. The tannery, with almost all its contents was destroyed by fire January 7th, 1852, but it was promptly rebuilt.

persons, went out into the woods nearly three miles from any house, and began a clearing. They had not so much as a path to guide them, but found their way by following marked trees on the lines of lots. A log cabin was built, into which Higgins and his wife moved a few weeks after, and there they long resided without neighbors, and seeing bears much oftener than human beings. Wild beasts infested that part of the town more than any other. In those days its bore the name of "bear ridge." Higgins had many stirring adventures with his savage companions, fourteen of which he killed, three in a single day. One night as he was walking home from Troy a bear followed him three miles through the woods. Some of the time Higgins sung, some of the time he scolded, by which means and the help of a stout cudgel he kept his pursuer at bay, though he was not able to kill him or to drive him off. At another time he was confronted by a she bear with cubs. She stood on her hind feet and disputed his passage. Higgins was unarmed, save with such stones and sticks as were near at hand, but he maintained his position till his dog came to help him, and with that assistance he put his adversaries to flight. Bears have not yet been utterly exterminated from the Gore, though they are now quite rare. So lately as the fall of 1858, Higgins had sight of one which he thought to be the largest he ever saw.* The progress of affairs in the Gore has been quite slow. The cleared land does not much exceed two hundred acres. On this there are three dwelling houses, occupied by four families, whose whole number of members is eleven.

* In the body of the town wild beasts have not, since the settlement, been very numerous nor mischievous. Growing crops and flocks of sheep have suffered somewhat, but not extensively, from their depredations. No bear has been killed since 1831. On the 20th of January 1838, three wolves were seen, and a wolf-hunt took place. Another hunt occurred March 30th, 1839, which resulted in the killing of one wolf. Other wild animals of the cat tribe have been seen occasionally and at long intervals.

The first death of an adult in the West part of the town was that of Mrs. Mary Hamilton, wife of Eber R. Hamilton, which took place October 14th, 1825. She was the first person buried in the graveyard near the village.

CHAPTER VI.

Place of town meeting established. Cabinet shop, fulling-mill, and grist-mill built. Suicide. Temperance movements. The first lawyer. Another store. Growth of the village in 1829. Meeting house built. Starch factory. Great sickness in 1843. Health and longevity. Infanticide.

At the March meeting in 1827 the town voted to hold its future meetings alternately at the Center and the village. For some years previous, meetings had been held at the Center school-house, which stood just North of Lebbeus Babcock's present residence; and earlier still, at a school-house on South hill, standing in the North East angle formed by the crossing of the roads; also at Dr. Redfield's, John Ide's, and various other private houses. They now became more permanently located at the two principal centers of population and influence, and since September 1837 they have been held exclusively at the village. For some years the village bore the name of Harmonville, which has now gone into disuse. Its boundaries were legally established to be a circle with a radius of half a mile from the center of the common, except that Southwardly it was limited by Irasburgh line.

In the fall of 1827 John W. Mussey built the shop which is still occupied by him, and in the following spring he commenced the cabinet business there. He was the first cabinet maker in Coventry. During the same fall, Jesse Cook, from Morristown, built a fulling-mill on the ground now occupied

by the starch factory, and furnished it with machines for carding wool and dressing cloth.* He also built a dwelling house on the hill Northeastwardly from the fulling-mill. This house, to which a second story has since been added, is the one now occupied by Dr. D. W. Blanchard. The same year, Elijah Cleveland & Co. built a grist-mill on the site of the present mill. Grinding was commenced there in January, 1828. Loring Frost was the miller for some months, and was succeeded by Emore Dailey.†

On the night of April 1st 1828, Enoch P. Ide, a clerk in the store of E. Cleveland & Co., committed suicide by drowning himself in Black River. When he was missed on the following morning, a memorandum, "water is my grave," gave a hint where to look for him. His body was recovered at evening, and the appearances indicated that he had tied a rope around his neck, attached a stone to it, and plunged into deep water just below the mill-dam. Three days before, William Dexter had drowned himself in Irasburgh by jumping from a bridge, which probably suggested to Ide the manner of his death. This was the first and hitherto the only suicide in Coventry. For the good fame of the town, it deserves to be added that this self-murder was not committed by one of its permanent citizens, but by a temporary resident. His remains were conveyed to St. Johnsbury, which had been his home.

* Samuel Boynton bought an undivided half of the fulling-mill, November 17th 1828, and carried on the business in company with Cook till January 28th, 1830, when a reconveyance of the property was effected. On the 20th of April, 1830, Cook sold to Thaddeus H. Flint and Daniel Bean, both from Sutton. A very great freshet occurred March 31st 1831, which undermined the mill and destroyed it. Flint and Bean then built another mill a few rods down the river. This was burned in December 1848, and was not rebuilt.

† Mr. Dailey purchased the mill December 20th, 1835, and in the fall of 1854 built a new mill to take the place of it.

In the Spring of 1828, Dr. S. S. Kendall built a house, which, with alterations and large additions, is now the tavern of Daniel Bean. Dr. Kendall removed from the Center to the village during the following Fall, and on the 30th of November 1829 opened his new house as a tavern.

The post office was removed to the village in the summer of 1828, and Loring Frost was appointed Postmaster. His commission bore date June 12th, 1828. The office was kept in the store of E. Cleveland & Co.*

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century intemperance prevailed everywhere, and the people of Coventry were not uninfected by the universal vice. Seventeen hogsheads of whiskey constituted a part of the first stock of goods brought into the village; at a time, too, when the population of the town hardly exceeded three hundred. There was none too much, however, to meet the demand. A customer, whose rule was to settle his account yearly, used to say that "almost every item in the account from one end to the other was nothing but whiskey, whiskey, whiskey." But in 1828 a change in opinion and practice took place. On Sunday, September 14th, the Rev. Nathaniel Hewitt preached a temperance sermon, the first discourse on that subject ever pronounced here. The novelty of his views secured attention, and the vigorous arguments with which he enforced them carried conviction to many minds. A Temperance Society was organized July 11th, 1829, as the result of whose efforts and of other appropriate means a decided reformation was ef-

* Mr. Frost held the office about nine years. His successors were Elijah Cleveland, Holland Thrasher, Calvin Harmon, and Holland Thrasher. Mr. Thrasher's second commission was dated March 22d, 1845, since which time he has held the office, through all the changes of government.

fected, and the town will now compare favorably, in that respect, with any other town in the State.*

On the 13th of November 1828, Samuel Sumner from St. Albans established himself in the practice of the law at Coventry. His office stood on a part of the present site of George H. Walworth & Co.'s store, and is now occupied as a dwelling-house by Moses Labelle. Mr. Sumner remained only till the succeeding May, when he removed to Troy.†

In the Fall of 1828, another store was built. Its original site is now a part of the school-house yard. In the summer of 1843 the store was removed, and it is now occupied by G. H. Walworth & Co. The first merchant who stocked it with goods was Ebenezer Clement, who commenced business in December 1828.‡

During the Summer and Fall of 1829 several of the largest

* Under the statute of 1844, authorizing the election of County Commissioners with authority to grant or refuse licenses, the town, in 1845, gave 56 votes for anti-license Commissioners and 33 for license Commissioners. In 1846 the vote was 45 to 29. Under the statute of 1846, submitting the question, "License or No License?" to the annual vote of the people, the vote in 1847 was 54 for License and 53 for No License. This did not, however, truly express public sentiment, for in 1848, only 34 votes were given for License against 78 for No License, and in 1849, the vote stood—16 to 78. On accepting the statute of 1852, the vote was 53 for accepting and 89 for rejecting. This vote was the result of a transient excitement. The town re-elected a representative who had voted for the passage of the law, and in 1858 and 1859 gave a nearly unanimous vote for a County Commissioner favorable to the strict enforcement of it.

† Mr. Sumner was succeeded by Charles Story, who commenced practice at Coventry in the Spring of 1830, and continued till the winter of 1849, when he removed to Newbury. H. W. Weed, from Sheldon, went into partnership with him November 13th, 1834, and continued some years. Oliver T. Brown commenced practice May 1st, 1842, and remained till March 1848, when he removed to St. Johnsbury East. William M. Dickerman commenced practice in the fall of 1847, and removed to Derby early in 1854. Henry H. Frost, a native of Coventry, commenced practice in the summer of 1850, and is now the resident lawyer.

‡ Mr. Clement soon took Nathan Lamb into partnership, and after continuing in business two or three years they sold to Dr. Henry Hewitt, who sold to Joseph Baker in March, 1832. Baker had little or no capital, but bought goods largely, and early in July his stock was attached and sold at auction by his creditors. It deserves to be mentioned, to the credit of the Coventry merchants and of their customers, that this was the only failure of a merchant that has occurred. He was succeeded by Ezra and Madison E. Sanger, who remained in trade till April 28th, 1834. Daniel P. Walworth and Abial M. Smith commenced business September 22d 1834; and continued in partnership till the Spring of 1840, when Walworth sold to Smith, who carried on business till the Spring of 1842. He then discontinued trade, and on the 22d of the following October, Walworth resumed business. In June 1855, he took into partnership Augustine C. West, who remained till September 1858.

buildings in the village were raised. Seth F. Cowles and Leonard Cowles built the house now occupied by the former, and commenced business as hatters. The shop in which they made hats was the same in which S. F. Cowles now does business, and their sales-room was the South front room.* Work was commenced on the meeting-house in July 1829. The raising of that edifice was a fortnight's job. It was begun on Monday, August 24th, and not completed till Saturday of the following week. On the 3d of October the frame of a dwelling-house for Daniel W. Harmon was raised. The same house is now occupied by Charles Thrasher. On the 10th of October the frame of Elijah Cleveland's present residence was raised, and by the following August the house was finished sufficiently to be occupied. During the same season, Calvin Harmon built the house in which Henry H. Frost lives. It was originally designed for mechanics' shops, and so divided as to furnish two such shops in each story. Its foundations were at first about six feet lower than they now are. The whole street along the bank of the river, has been raised from three to six feet. Before that was done, the river, in times of freshet, not only overflowed the street, but invaded the cellars in that vicinity, filling them sometimes to the depth of three feet.

In the summer of 1831, the Rev. Ralden A. Watkins built a dwelling house, the same in which Benjamin F. Herbert now lives. During the same season, Calvin P. Ladd built a two-story shop just below the grist-mill. Here he did business as a general machinist; and manufactured, among other things, a large number of winnowing-mills. The shop

*S. F. Cowles and L. Cowles continued in partnership about eight years. S. F. Cowles then carried on the hatting business alone, till 1849. In 1842 he also commenced business as a watchmaker, and as this business increased, the other was brought to a close.

was afterwards removed and modified, and is now occupied by Childs Brooks as a shoe-shop.

The starch-factory now owned by Samuel Burbank and Jonathan Aldrich was built by Elijah Cleveland in the summer of 1837, and the manufacture of starch was commenced November 27th. This factory was a great advantage to the farmers, furnishing a ready and sure market for one of their most important crops. Its business increased from year to year, and the production of potatoes kept even pace with the increasing demand for them. About thirty thousand bushels are now annually converted into starch.

The year 1843 was one of great and peculiar sorrow in Coventry, as well as throughout this whole region of country. Erysipelas, in its most malignant form, raged epidemically, and committed fearful devastation. So great were its ravages as almost to compel a suspension of all business, except ministering to the necessities of the sick and rendering the last offices to the dead. Sometimes its victims died within two days from the attack, in other cases they lingered for several weeks. Those who recovered did not for months fully regain their previous health. The disease was fatal alike to the very young, the middle-aged, and the old. In one instance, a whole family, husband, wife, and child, was destroyed by the pestilence. It was equally dangerous in the most healthy localities and in those which ordinarily would seem more assailable by disease. The efforts of physicians to arrest its progress were futile, till, having apparently spent its force, it disappeared. During that year the list of dead numbered forty-one: more than six times the average number, and more than a twentieth of the whole population.

Notwithstanding the numerous deaths in that year, the

mortality in Coventry has been less than is usual in towns of equal population. The whole number of deaths within fifty-nine years from the first settlement of the town was three hundred and seventy-six, an average of six and one third annually. This includes deaths by crime and casualty as well as by disease. Two deaths were occasioned by crime, namely, one by suicide and one by infanticide; and twelve were occasioned by casualties of various kinds. The person who attained the greatest age in town was Mary Fairbrother. She died October 25th, 1843, at the age of ninety-five. Next in seniority was Salmon Wright, who died April 14th, 1857, aged ninety-three.

On or about the 14th of June 1846, a male child of a year's age was murdered by its mother, Hannah Parker, *alias* Stickney. The murder was effected by throwing the child into Black River near the bridge which crosses it in the North Neighborhood. The mother had been married once or twice, but there was considerable uncertainty as to the paternity of the child. She had no home nor means of support, and the child was a hindrance in the way of her procuring assistance or employment. These circumstances overcame the maternal instinct, and persuaded her to the murder. Before throwing in the child, she disabled it from making efforts to escape, by tying together its neck and one leg with her garter. She was arrested, confessed her crime, and was committed to jail. In due season she was indicted, and on the second trial was found guilty; but exceptions being taken to some rulings of the Court, the judgment was reversed, and after she had remained in jail about eight years, she was allowed to go at large, the long confinement being regarded as severe a punishment as public justice required to be inflicted upon an offender who, in great weakness of mind and extreme

desperateness of circumstances, had committed crime. Although this transaction took place within the limits of Coventry, the morality of the town is not thereby impeached, as the criminal was never a resident of the place for any time however short.

Daniel Mason of Craftsbury; Charge to the Pastor by Elder Mason; Right Hand of Fellowship by Elder Boynton; Concluding Prayer by Dea. Nathaniel Kendall of Derby. In 1816, a revival occurred, and twenty persons were added to the church. On the 2d of November in the same year seven persons were set off to constitute a church in Irasburgh. Revival influences continued in 1817, as the result of which, thirty additions took place. Twenty-three persons were set off, September 24th, 1817, to constitute a church in Newport. Eight persons were set off, April 13th, 1818, to constitute a church in Troy. In 1825, twenty-two individuals united with the church, and Thomas Wells and Thomas Baldwin were elected deacons. Elder Ide's pastoral relation to the church continued nearly sixteen years. He was dismissed in January 1831, and preached his farewell sermon on the last Sabbath in that month.

In 1830–31, a meeting house was built at the Center.* It contained fifty-two pews, and by the constitution of the society in which the legal title was vested, each holder of a pew was authorized to have the pulpit occupied one Sabbath in a year by a preacher of such denomination as he preferred. A very large majority of the pews was held by Baptists, and the house became practically a Baptist meeting-house.

On the 22d of June 1831, Alvin Bailey and Gardner Bartlett, members of this church, and George B. Ide, then a member of the Baptist Church in Derby, were ordained to the ministry of the gospel. Rev. Joseph M. Graves preached the sermon. Early in 1832, Elder Prosper Powell was engaged as Stated Supply, and remained about two years.

* This house and the school-house near it are the only brick buildings in the town. In 1829, Amasa Wheelock commenced building a two-story tavern of brick, on the site where Nathaniel West's house now stands; but he had such ill success in burning his kiln, that the undertaking was abandoned.

In August 1834, Elder Prosper Davison was called to the pastorate. His ordination took place September 9th, with services as follows: Sermon by Elder Edward Mitchell of Eaton, C. E., from Acts 11: 24; Consecrating Prayer by Elder Silas Davison; Charge to the Pastor by Elder Jonathan Merriam of Passumpsic; Right Hand of Fellowship by Elder Prosper Powell; Charge to the People by Elder E. Mitchell; Concluding Prayer by Elder William M. Guilford of Derby. Within a month after the ordination, twelve persons united with the church. Elder Davison continued Pastor till the Spring of 1837, when he was dismissed.

On the 22d of September, 1839, A. H. House, a member of this church, was licensed to preach the gospel; and on the 23d of June 1840, he was ordained to the ministry.

After the dismissal of Elder Davison, the church remained without a pastor, and was supplied with preaching only for brief periods, with long intervals between. The tendency was downwards. Deaths, excommunications, and emigration deprived it of a large majority of its members. In 1851, an effort was made to strengthen the things which remained, that were ready to die. Elder Henry I. Campbell was employed as preacher, the church covenant was renewed, and during the year of Elder Campbell's ministry, five persons were added to the church. But the attempt at resuscitation was unsuccessful, and this church, once the strongest of that denomination in the County, has become extinct. But its existence was not in vain. It was the parent of three other churches which are still living and flourishing, and of six ministers of the gospel who have been active and successful in their profession.

The first sermon in Coventry by a Congregational minister

was preached at William Esty's house in the summer of 1807. It is probable that Rev. Chauncey Cook was the preacher. He visited the town that season as missionary of a society in Connecticut. On the 2d of October 1810, seventeen persons, six of whom were males and eleven females, were organized into a church by the Rev. Seth Payson, D. D., of Rindge, N. H., a missionary of the Monadnoc Association. At the same time, the ordinance of baptism was administered to twenty-two children of believing parents. Perez Gardner was elected Deacon, and Dr. Peleg Redfield, Clerk. In June, 1811, an assessment of twenty-five cents on each member was made, "to be laid out in religious tracts and to defray church expenses." For several years there was no preaching except occasionally by missionaries, who preached a few weeks or a few months as circumstances would allow. Among those who thus ministered to the church in its infancy were Rev. Messrs. Jonathan Hovey, Jonathan Hovey, Jr., Samuel Goddard, Silas L. Bingham, John Truair, and James Parker. In 1816 the Rev. Luther Leland, then pastor of the church in Derby, was employed one fourth of the time. A revival followed, and on the 13th of October sixteen were added to the church. As yet there was but little pecuniary ability, and no attempt was made to settle a pastor, but meetings were regularly maintained at various school-houses and dwelling-houses, and printed sermons were read.

In September 1822, Rev. Lyman Case commenced preaching as a candidate for settlement. On the 7th of October, a Congregational Society was organized, which concurred with the church in calling Mr. Case to the pastoral charge. The stipulated salary was one hundred and fifty dollars, payable "in money or other property, for his labors one half of the time," in addition to which the society voted to give him one

half of the land reserved for the first settled minister. Mr. Case's ordination took place March 19th, 1823. Rev. James Parker of Troy offered the Introductory Prayer, Rev. Benjamin Wooster of Fairfield preached the Sermon; Rev. James Hobart of Berlin offered the Ordaining Prayer; Rev. Messrs. Wooster, Hobart, and Thomas Skelton of Enosburgh imposed hands; Rev. T. Skelton gave the Charge to the Pastor; Rev. William A. Chapin of Craftsbury gave the Right Hand of Fellowship; Rev. Elderkin J. Boardman of Bakersfield gave the Charge to the People; and Rev. Jacob N. Loomis of Hardwick offered the Concluding Prayer. In 1825, an extensive revival took place, as the result of which there were thirty-three additions to the church. Mr. Case's pastorate continued till February 7th, 1828, when he was dismissed by a mutual council.

In 1829–30, a Congregational meeting-house was built, at an expense of $2750.* It was dedicated October 7th, 1830. Rev. David Sutherland of Bath, N. H., preached the Dedication Sermon.

Rev. Ralden A. Watkins commenced preaching in the Summer of 1830, and was soon engaged as Stated Supply. Seven members were set off, February 23d, 1831, to constitute a church in Newport. In 1831, a great revival occurred. A meeting, continuing for six days, was attended by an assembly estimated to number five hundred. Rev. Messrs. William A. Chapin, Elias W. Kellogg, Otis F. Curtis, James Robertson, Reuben Mason, and Alexander L. Twilight, took part in the services. As a result of this and other means thirty-two were added to the church during that year. Mr. Watkins remained about six years, and preached his farewell

* A bell was put in the belfry of this house November 29th, 1847. About the same time, through the munificence of Elijah Cleveland, a public clock, hitherto the only one in the County, was placed in the tower, at an expense of $250.

sermon, May 15th, 1836. Rev. Lyndon S. French commenced preaching in the fall of 1837, and remained as Stated Supply seven years. During his ministry, twenty united with the church by profession, and fifteen by letter.

On the 5th of February 1844, the church, by a unanimous vote, called Asahel R. Gray to the pastorate. Mr. Gray was a native of Coventry, a member of this church, and, at the time of the call, a Senior in the University of Vermont. He was ordained November 13th, 1844. The exercises were as follows: Invocation and Reading the Scriptures by the Rev. George Stone of Troy; Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Ora Pearson of Barton; Sermon by the Rev. John Wheeler, D. D., of Burlington; Ordaining Prayer by the Rev. James Johnson of Irasburgh; Charge to the Pastor by the Rev. Samuel R. Hall of Craftsbury; Right Hand of Fellowship by the Rev. Robert V. Hall of Stanstead, C. E.; Charge to the People by the Rev. William A. Chapin of Greensboro; Concluding Prayer by the Rev. Elias N. Kilby of Albany. Mr. Gray's pastoral relation continued nearly fourteen years, and was terminated by a mutual council June 29th, 1858. During his ministry, there were seventeen additions by profession and nineteen by letter. On the 8th of August 1858, Pliny H. White commenced preaching as Stated Supply. In the Winter of 1858–9, a revival took place, and resulted in about thirty hopeful conversions. During the first year of Mr. White's ministry, fourteen united by profession and six by letter.

On the 14th of August 1840, a Freewill Baptist church was organized by Elders David Cross and Daniel Quimby. It consisted of seven persons, four males and three females. Dexter Currier was chosen Clerk, and it was voted to hold monthly meetings on the second Saturday in each month.

John Wilson, a member of this church, was publicly set apart as an evangelist, at the August term, 1840, of the Wheelock Quarterly Meeting. The growth of this church has been principally in Brownington, and its public worship is now maintained in that town.

A society for the support of Universalist preaching was organized, July 16th, 1859, by the choice of Daniel P. Walworth as Moderator and John M. Vezey as Clerk and Treasurer. For several years previous to that date, Universalist preaching, once in four weeks, had been maintained. Rev. George Severance of Glover preached in 1858–9.

The history of Coventry in the past relates to only a brief period of time, and records events comparatively unimportant. The foundations have been laid, the superstructure remains to be built. Its true history is in the future; to be wrought by the heads, and hearts, and hands of its inhabitants, and to be written by some future annalist who shall record more rapid and far greater progress in all that makes a community happy, prosperous, and useful.

APPENDIXES.

A.

RESIDENTS OF COVENTRY WHO HAVE BEEN GRADUATED AT COLLEGE. NATIVES MARKED WITH A *.

Isaac Parker,	Middlebury	1815.
Isaac Fletcher Redfield,	Dartmouth	1825.
*George Barker Ide,	Middlebury	1830.
*Timothy Parker Redfield,	Dartmouth	1836.
Moses Robinson,	Middlebury	1839.
*Asahel Reed Gray,	Burlington	1844.
Ira Osmore Miller,	Burlington	1848.

B.

RESIDENTS OF COVENTRY WHO HAVE ENTERED PROFESSIONAL LIFE.

MINISTERS.

John Ide, George B. Ide,* Alvin Bailey, Gardner Bartlett, Jonathan Baldwin, *Baptist.* Asahel R. Gray,* Moses Robinson, *Congregational.*

ATTORNEYS.

Isaac F. Redfield, Timothy P. Redfield,* Don A. Bartlett, Amasa Bartlett, Leavitt Bartlett,* Henry H. Frost,* Ira O. Miller.

PHYSICIANS.

Cassander Ide,* Luther F. Parker.*

C.

MEMBERS OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS FROM COVENTRY.

1814,	Peleg Redfield.
1822,	John Ide.
1828,	Argalus Harmon.
1836,	Philip Flanders.
1843,	Charles Story.
1850,	Isaac Parker.
1857,	Elijah Cleveland.

D.

REPRESENTATIVES OF COVENTRY IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VERMONT.

1803 and 04,	Joseph Marsh.
1804,	John Ide, Jr.
1806,	No Election,
1807 and 08,	John Ide, Jr.
1809, 10 and 11,	No Election.
1812 to 1820,	Peleg Redfield.
1821 to 1827,	John Ide.
1828,	Calvin Harmon
1829,	Philip Flanders.
1830,	Calvin Harmon.
1831,	Isaac Parker.
1832,	Charles Story.
1833,	Isaac Parker.
1834,	Charles Story.
1835,	Holland Thrasher.
1836 and 37,	Argalus Harmon.
1838,	Samuel S. Kendall.
1839 to 1841,	Elijah Cleveland.
1842 and 43,	Thomas Guild.
1844 and 45,	Josiah B. Wheelock.
1846,	Elijah Cleveland.
1847 and 48,	Isaac Parker.
1849 and 50,	Wm. M. Dickerman.
1851,	Samuel S. Kendall.
1852 and 53,	Horace S. Jones.
1854 and 55,	David W. Blanchard.
1856 and 57,	Loring Frost.
1858,	Richard W. Peabody.

E.

RESIDENTS OF COVENTRY WHO HAVE HELD COUNTY OFFICES.

John Ide, Assistant Judge,	1824.
John Ide, Road Commissioner,	1828.
Isaac Parker, "	1833, 1839 to 1842.
Elijah Cleveland, "	1844 to 1846.
Charles Storey, States Attorney,	1836 and 37.
Wm. M. Dickerman, "	1851 and 52.
Silas G. Bean, Sheriff,	1857.

F.

TOWN OFFICERS.

CLERKS.

1803 and 04, Joseph Marsh; 1805, John Ide, Jr.; 1806 to 1811, Peleg Redfield; 1812, John Ide, Jr.; 1813 to 1826, Peleg Redfield; 1827 to 1834, Elijah Cleveland; 1835, Isaac Parker; 1836 to 1844, Samuel S. Kendall; 1845, Oliver T. Brown; 1846, S. S. Kendall; 1847, Greenleaf Boynton; 1848 to 1851, S. S. Kendall; 1852 to 1859, Henry H. Frost.

TREASURERS.

1803, Samuel Cobb; 1804, Perez Gardner; 1805, Samuel Cobb; 1806, John Ide, Jr.; 1807, Peleg Redfield; 1808 to 1812, John Ide, Jr.; 1813 to 1817, Samuel Boynton; 1818, Rufus Guild; 1819 and 20, Isaac Parker; 1824, Samuel Boynton; 1825 and 26, Peleg Redfield; 1827 to 1834, Elijah Cleveland; 1835, Isaac Parker; 1836 to 1846, Samuel S. Kendall; 1847, Greenleaf Boynton; 1848 to 1851, S. S. Kendall; 1852 to 1859, H. H. Frost.

FIRST CONSTABLES.

1803 and 04, Timothy Woodbridge; 1805, John Mitchell; 1806, Solomon Pierce; 1807, Simon B. Heustis; 1808, John Farnsworth; 1809, Simon B. Heustis; 1810 and 11, Jotham Pierce; 1812, Aristides Heustis; 1813, Solomon Pierce; 1814 and 15, David Huggins; 1816 and 17, Daniel Heustis; 1818 and 19, Peleg Redfield; 1820, Hanover Cobb; 1821 and 22, Daniel Heustis; 1823, Thomas Guild; 1824 and 25, Daniel Heustis; 1826 and 27, Thomas Guild; 1828 and 29, Daniel Heustis; 1830, Silas Sears; 1831 to 1833, Thomas Guild; 1834 and 35, Silas Sears; 1836, Thomas Guild; 1837, Seth F. Cowles; 1838, Holland Thrasher; 1839, Abner Sylvester; 1840, Silas Sears; 1841 to 1844, Josiah B. Wheelock; 1845, Horace W. Root; 1846, J. B. Wheelock; 1847, Samuel F. French; 1848, H. W. Root; 1849, S. F. French; 1850, H. W. Root; 1851, Dan Guild; 1852, Silas G. Bean; 1853 and 1854, Dan Guild; 1855 and 1856, Silas G. Bean; 1857, Dan Guild; 1858 and 1859, Isaac Parker, Jr.

SELECTMEN.

1803. Samuel Cobb,
Daniel B. Smith,
John Ide, Jr.

1804. John Ide, Jr.,
Amherst Stewart,
Wm. Esty.

1805. Perez Gardner,
Solomon Pierce,
Jotham Pierce.

1806. Joseph Marsh,
John Farnsworth,
George Dorr,

1807. John Ide, Jr.,
Peleg Redfield,
Amherst Stewart.

1808. Joseph Day,
Joseph Marsh,
Jotham Pierce.

1809. Joseph Day,
Perez Gardner,
David Huggins.

1810. John Ide, Jr.,
Samuel Boynton,
Jotham Pierce.

1811. Ira Clark,
Thomas Guild,
Jasper Johnson.

1812. Thaddeus Elliott,
Tisdale Cobb,
David Huggins.

1813. Samuel Bailey,
Israel Ide,
Daniel Ide.

1814. Thomas Guild,
Ebenezer M. Gray,
Samuel Heustis.

1815. David Huggins,
Peleg Redfield,
Samuel Boynton.

1816 & '17. Perez Gardner,
Thomas Guild,
Ebenezer M. Gray.

1818. Peleg Redfield,
Samuel Boynton,
David Huggins.

1819. Peleg Redfield,
Isaac Parker,
Timothy W. Knight.

1820. David Huggins,
Thomas Baldwin,
Timothy W. Knight.

1821. Perez Gardner,
Thomas Baldwin,
E. M. Gray.

1822. David Huggins,
Samuel Boynton,
Philip Flanders.

1823 and 24. Calvin Harmon,
David Huggins,
E. M. Gray.

1825. David Huggins,
Isaac Parker,
Silas Sears.

1826. Isaac Parker,
Thomas Guild,
E. M. Gray.

1827. Thomas Baldwin,
Philip Flanders,
E. M. Gray.

1828 to 1831. Argalus Harmon,
Thomas Baldwin,
David Huggins.

1832. Argalus Harmon,
David Huggins,
Isaac Parker.

1833. David Huggins,
Isaac Parker,
Ebenezer Clement.

1834. Isaac Parker,
Samuel Boynton,
Loring Frost.

1835. Thomas Guild,
Philip Flanders,
E. M. Gray.

1836. Philip Flanders,
Elijah Cleveland,
E. M. Gray.

1837. E. M. Gray,
Thomas Baldwin,
Thomas Guild.

1838. Thomas Guild,
E. M. Gray,
Argalus Harmon,

1839. Isaac Parker,
Holland Thrasher,
Benjamin Thrasher.

1840. Philip Flanders,
Daniel P. Walworth,
Moody Soper.

1841. Philip Flanders,
Moody Soper,
Loring Frost.

1842. Loring Frost,
D. P. Walworth,
Oren Alton.
1843. Loring Frost,
Oren Alton,
Holland Thrasher.
1844 to 1846. Holland Thrasher,
Ira Boynton,
Joseph W. Mitchell.
1847. Holland Thrasher,
Isaac Parker,
John Armington.
1848. Josiah B. Wheelock,
J. W. Mitchell,
Ira Boynton.
1849. J. B. Wheelock,
J. W. Mitchell,
Horace S. Jones.
1850. H. S. Jones,
Holland Thrasher,
J. W. Mitchell.
1851. J. B. Wheelock,
Joseph S. Kidder,
Amasa Plastridge.
1852 & 53. Joseph S. Kidder,
Amasa Plastridge,
Azariah Wright.
1854. Azariah Wright,
J. S. Kidder,
Lewis Nye.
1855. Lewis Nye,
Nathaniel W. Gray,
Erastus Wright.
1856. Elijah Cleveland,
Azariah Wright,
Richard W. Peabody.
1857. Richard W. Peabody,
Abel W. Fairbrother,
Isaac Parker, Jr.
1858. A. W. Fairbrother,
Isaac Parker, Jr.,
Charles Thrasher.
1859. A. W. Fairbrother,
Sylvester Cass,
Ezra Guild.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS.

1846 & '47. Isaac Parker.
1848 & '49. Asahel R. Gray.
1850. William M. Dickerman.
1851 to '55. Henry H. Frost.
1856 to '58. David W. Blanchard.
1859. A. R. Gray.

G.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

No. I includes the North half of lot 3, lots 4 to 14 inclusive, 30 to 39 inclusive, 62, 63, and 64. Number of scholars in 1859, 26.

No. II includes lots 40 to 58 inclusive, (except lot 49, which belongs to District No 9 in Irasburgh,) the Southerly part of lot 70, lots 71 to 78 inclusive, so much of lot 81 as lies North of the road, and lots 82 and 83. Number of scholars 44.

No III includes lots 59, 60, 61, 65 to 69 inclusive, the Northerly part of lot 70, lots 84 to 101 inclusive, so much of lot 102 as lies East of Black River, and lot 121. Number of scholars 47.

No IV includes lots 79, 80, so much of lot 81 as lies South of the road, so much of lot 102 as lies West of Black River, lots 103 to 113 inclusive, 136 to 143 inclusive, 168, 169, 170, and 171. Number of scholars 116.

No V includes lots 114 to 120 inclusive, 130 to 135 inclusive, 144 to 149 inclusive, 162 to 167 inclusive. Number of scholars 27.

No VI includes the South half of lot 1, (the North half belonging to district No 6, in Brownington,) lot 2, the South half of lot 3, lots 15 to 29 inclusive. Number of scholars 28.

No VII includes lots 122, 123, 125 to 129 inclusive, 150 to 154 inclusive, 157 to 161 inclusive. Number of scholars 18.

The Gore constitutes a district of itself, except lot 1, which belongs to a district in Irasburgh.

H.

POPULATION ACCORDING TO THE U. S. CENSUS.

A. D. 1800,	7
1810,	178
1820,	282
1830,	735
1840,	796
1850,	867
1860,	
1870,	

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to many citizens of Coventry for assistance rendered him in preparing this work; particularly to Hon. Isaac Parker, Hon. Elijah Cleveland, and Dea. Loring Frost, for copious information, and to Henry H. Frost, Esq., for free access to his valuable manuscripts.

No small pains have been taken to secure accuracy in the statement of facts, and exactness as respects dates; but the author is not insensible of his liability to mistake, and will take it very kindly of any person who will detect an error and furnish the means of correcting it, or will communicate additional facts of importance or interest, to be put on record for the use of a future historian.





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